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THE NATURE CONSERVANCY NEWS

WINTER 1975

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COVER PHOTO: Reeds in a snowstorm, by Michael P. Gadomski.

INSIDE COVER PHOTO: Trees reflected in a snow-lined creek, by Barbara Dodge.

LAND CONSERVATION THROUGH PRIVATE ACTION

The Nature Conservancy is a national conservation organization, receiving its support from the public, whose resources are devoted to the preservation of ecologically and environmentally significant land.

Some 735,051 acres of forests, swamps, marshes, prairies, mountains, beaches, and islands in 1,266 projects throughout the United States, have been saved from destruction by the Conservancy since the acquisition of its first preserve in 1954.

The Nature Conservancy works in three ways to protect threatened natural areas: by purchase of land with funds raised through public subscription, by acceptance of donations of land, and by advance acquisition of land for local, state, and federal governments.

A member-governed non-profit organization, The Nature Conservancy was incorporated in 1951 in the District of Columbia for scientific and educational purposes.

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* (Includes Life Membership with initial contribution)
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NEW PROJECTS

Arkansas

CAMP LOGOLY (Columbia County). The 280-acre tract near Magnolia, Arkansas, includes more than 10 mineral springs and a spring-fed lake surrounded by virgin pine and mature oaks. The Conservancy will convey the area to the Arkansas Parks Department for establishment of an environmental education study site for area school systems.

Colorado

BODO PRESERVE (La Plata County). Forming a broad basin covered primarily with pinion pine, juniper and scrub oak, the 7,100-acre property is critical elk and deer winter range. The Colorado Division of Wildlife has long recognized the area as its highest priority for acquisition of big game habitat. The preserve, between 6,700 and 7,700 feet in elevation, is scheduled for ultimate transfer to the State of Colorado for administration by the Division of Wildlife.

CHAMBERS' PEACEFUL VALLEY (Jefferson County). The 12-acre gift of Donald and Dorothy Chambers includes a narrow strip along Walnut Creek and the adjacent ridge. Management of the preserve will be the responsibility of the Colorado Chapter.

Connecticut

JOHN B. CURRIE SANCTUARY (Litchfield County). Bounded on two sides by Macedonia State Park, the 80-acre property rises steeply to the east with spectacular rock outcroppings on the slope. The area is richly wooded and supports a good assortment of ferns and wildflowers. The land and an endowment for its management are a gift by Mrs. Bethia S. Currie. The Connecticut Chapter is responsible for management of the area.

GRISWOLD POINT (New London County). A one-half interest in 21 acres on Connecticut's coast is a gift of Dr. Matthew Griswold. The point is listed as one of Connecticut's Natural Endangered Areas and is the state's best example of a barrier beach. Highly productive tidal mud flats adjoin the beach on both the seaward and inland sides. Management of the property will be the responsibility of the Connecticut Chapter.

Florida

LITTLE PINE ISLAND (Lee County). The 2,537-acre estuary, a gift of the estate of Julius Wetstone, lies adjacent to a state refuge and the Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge. The property's mangrove swamps provide habitat for numerous fin and shell fish, as well as many waterfowl species

including the great white heron and brown pelican. The area is to be transferred to the state for management as a wilderness area. 1,722 additional acres were purchased by the state with the Conservancy's assistance.

Georgia

HOFWYL-BROADFIELD PLANTATION (Glynn County). The 1,268-acre property, a gift of the Ophelia Troup Dent Estate, includes 760 acres of brackish tidal marsh on the Altamaha River. The marsh lands were once diked for rice production, but now provide habitat for wading birds and migrating waterfowl. An upland area of live oak and pine supports a population of small mammals native to the southern Georgia coast. The area has been transferred to the state for inclusion in the State Heritage Trust Program.

Maine

SHEEP ISLAND (Hancock County). A 5-acre island off Little Deer Isle's Blastow Cove was purchased by the Maine Chapter. The island was formed by a volcanic eruption, and one end of the island is flint while the other is jasper (rhyolite). A prehistoric slippage between the two rock masses has created a spectacular gorge on the island's sea side. Management of the island will be the responsibility of the Chapter.

Michigan

ROBINSON PRESERVE—Addition—(Berrien County). Mr. and Mrs. William S. Robinson donated an additional 15 acres, bringing the preserve's total to 80 acres. The area contains an oak-hickory forest with beech, tulip poplar, sour gum, maple and ash. Andrews University's Biology Department uses the preserve for research and is responsible for management of the area.

Minnesota

BURNTSIDE ISLANDS (St. Louis County). The Minnesota Chapter purchased 58 acres consisting of two islands (Pine, 13 acres, and Snellman, 45 acres) in Burntside Lake. Both islands are classic examples of the pine-forested, glaciated, rock-outcrop islands of the Superior-Quetico Wilderness canoe country. Pine Island contains a virgin forest of red and white pine, and both islands lie within range of an existing timber wolf pack. Purchased with funds granted by the Ober Foundation, the islands will be managed by the Minnesota Chapter.

CUTOVER ISLAND (St. Louis County). In cooperation with the National Park Service, the Conservancy purchased 325 acres for eventual inclusion in Voyageurs National Park. The island, covered with spruce, balsam firm, aspen, northern pine, basswood, birch and ash-elm, is the largest island in Lake Kabetogama. The area will be managed by the National Park Service.

MACDOUGALL HOMESTEAD (Morrison County). 102 acres along the east bank of the Mississippi River include a stand of mature white pines, a prairie bluff, and an entire floodplain island in mid-river. The island and the white pine grove provide a rookery for great blue herons. A homestead, constructed in the early 1880's, is located on the tract. The Minnesota Chapter purchased the area, assisted by a grant from the Weyerhaeuser Foundation.

MINNESOTA PRAIRIE CHICKEN PRESERVE SYSTEM—Pankrantz Memorial Prairie Addition—(Polk County). The level expanse of native grassland supports a fine diversity of prairie grasses and forbs. Bobolinks, marbled godwits and upland plovers inhabit the 160-acre tract, and a booming ground of the greater prairie chicken lies a short distance away. Now totaling 314 acres, Pankrantz Memorial Prairie is managed by the Minnesota Chapter with the assistance of the University of Minnesota at Crookston and the Department of Natural Resources. The Chapter is currently project fund raising.

Mississippi

SANDHILL CRANE SANCTUARY (Jackson County). With special financing from The Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States, the Conservancy purchased 1,709 acres of habitat for the endangered Mississippi sandhill crane. The area is scheduled to be transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for creation of a National Wildlife Refuge. See story beginning on page xx.

Montana

BANDY PROPERTY (Missoula and Granite Counties). On behalf of the U.S. Forest Service, the Conservancy acquired an area providing access to Lola National Forest. The 1,175-acre property is traversed by Rock Creek, designated a "Blue Ribbon Trout Stream." Elevations range from 4,800 to 3,600 feet with Douglas fir and ponderosa pine on the higher elevations. The area will be transferred to the U.S. Forest Service for management.

Nebraska

WILLA CATHER MEMORIAL PRAIRIE (Webster County). A 610-acre tract of native prairie was set aside as a memorial to Willa Cather, one

of the nation's most distinguished writers and a chronicler of life on the American grasslands. The property lies five miles south of Red Cloud, in rolling hills overlooking the Republican River Valley. Funds for purchase and management of the prairie were provided by the Woods Charitable Fund, Inc. See story beginning on page xx.

New Hampshire

FLAGG PROPERTY (Merrimack County). A conservation easement on 88½ acres was donated by Mr. Frederick P. Flagg and the late Mrs. Flagg. The wooded land lies on the southwest slope of Bald Sunapee Mountain, and elevations range from 1,220 to 1,820 feet. The donor will manage the area.

WHITE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL FOREST—Addition—(Carroll County). On behalf of the U.S. Forest Service, the Conservancy acquired 45 acres fronting the Swift River. The area is to be transferred to the Forest Service for addition to the White Mountain National Forest.

New York

CLAY MARSH—Dingman Tract—(Onondaga County). On behalf of the Town of Clay, the Conservancy purchased 45 acres within the last major cattail marsh in Onondaga County. The entire marsh covers about 1,500 acres, a major portion of which the State of New York is in the process of acquiring; the Town of Clay hopes to purchase the remaining 370 acres with the Conservancy's assistance. With the purchase of the Dingman Tract, 202 acres have been set aside.

DICKENS PRESERVE (Westchester County). Located along a portion of the channel connecting Lake Oscaleta and Lake Waccabuc, the 4-acre tract is a dense stand of red maple, high bush blueberry, royal ferns and related marsh vegetation. The property, a gift of Mr. & Mrs. Merwin F. Dickens, has been transferred to the Town of Lewisboro and is managed by the town's Conservation Commission.

GREAT GULLY—Addition—(Cayuga County). The 19-acre property is the second in a series of proposed acquisitions along and within Great Gully. The gully is a four-mile scenic ravine on the east side of Lake Cayuga. It is entirely forested with mixed hardwoods, white pine and hemlock. The Central New York Chapter is fund raising for the project.

PACK DEMONSTRATION FOREST—Hudson River Preserve Addition—(Warren County). The area's varied terrain ranges from rocky floodplain to thin-soiled ridgetop. The 3-acre property includes 1,400 feet of frontage on the Hudson River. A gift of the Niagara Mohawk Company, the land is surrounded by Pack Demonstration Forest, owned by the state and held in trust by Syracuse University. The Conservancy will transfer the tract to the state for administration by the Pack Demonstration Forest.

North Carolina

GREAT DISMAL SWAMP (Chesapeake City, Virginia, and Camden and Gates Counties, North Carolina). Two tracts totaling 14,227 acres are contiguous to the Union Camp gift and to other land already owned by the Conservancy. Like the rest of the swamp, the tracts include cypress swamps, brier thickets, pine stands, evergreen shrub bogs, stands of Atlantic cedar, and swamp forests of red maple. The land, purchased with special funding provided by Aetna Life & Casualty Company, is to be transferred to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Ohio

LITTLE MIAMI RIVER—Morris Tract—(Warren County). Nine acres of floodplain forest in-

clude frontage on the Little Miami, a unit of the Ohio and Federal Scenic Rivers system. The Conservancy will transfer the property to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for inclusion in its ongoing Little Miami Scenic River Project.

Tennessee

ROAN MOUNTAIN (Carter County, Tennessee, and Avery County, North Carolina). Three tracts totaling approximately 1,040 acres were purchased by the Conservancy. The mountain property is mostly wooded and is traversed by the Appalachian Trail. 875 acres were purchased on behalf of the U.S. Forest Service; the remaining 166 acres were purchased by Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, a project committee of The Nature Conservancy. Fund raising is in progress.

Texas

HYATT LONGLEAF PINELAND (HOOKS-REID BOG)—Addition—(Tyler County). 30 acres in the heart of the Big Thicket consist of long-leaf pine upland and savannah, as well as three small baygalls (low-lying swampy areas with white bay, red bay, and blackgum trees). The upland is the source of seepage water providing moisture for Hooks-Reid Bog, acquired by the Conservancy in 1971. Funds for the purchase will be provided by a joint fund raising effort of the Conservancy's Texas Chapter and the Big Thicket Association.

Vermont

H. LAURENCE ACHILLES NATURAL AREA, Shelburne Pond—Additions—(Chittenden County). With the purchase of two tracts totaling 185 acres, 40% of the frontage on Shelburne Pond has been acquired for preservation. The Pond contains extensive marshes along its shore and is surrounded by a mature stand of hardwoods. Fund raising for the purchase of the two tracts is being conducted by the Vermont Chapter.

Virginia

CROOKED CREEK FISHING AREA—Larrowe Tracts—(Carroll County). Located in the Blue Ridge Mountains, the 74-acre tract consists of native blue grass pasture on steep terrain with frontage on a trout stream. The property has been transferred to the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries for inclusion in a 1,075-acre recreational area.

MASON NECK—Addition—(Fairfax County). Five acres of mixed hardwood forest were purchased in a cooperative effort with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The Conservancy will transfer the property to the Fish & Wildlife Service for addition to Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge.

VIRGINIA COAST RESERVE—Additions—(Accomack County). Sandy and Revel Islands, 1,800 acres of marsh, sand, and forest on Virginia's Atlantic shore, were purchased with funds provided by the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust. The islands are made up of about 75% salt marsh, which provides prime habitat for many species of birds, including skimmers, gulls, willets, and oyster catchers. The osprey, pressured throughout its range, also nests on the islands. The Virginia Coast Reserve now totals over 33,000 acres.

Wisconsin

BAXTER'S HOLLOW—Ryan Woods Addition—(Sauk County). The 40-acre tract contains a forest of aspen, maple, and timber oak, and a stream which is a headwater of Otter Creek. A gift of Mrs. Margie Boissard, the area will be managed by the Wisconsin Chapter. The Baxter's Hollow preserve now totals 329 acres.

RUSH RIVER AND LAKE PEPIN SANCTUARY (Pierce County). The Rush River flows through the 119-acre property and empties into Lake Pepin. Sloughs and backwaters offer northern pike spawning grounds and nursery areas. Mallards, teal and wood ducks nest here, and muskent and beaver frequent the area. The preserve is scheduled for eventual transfer to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for inclusion in a Statewide Fish Habitat project.

WAUBESA WETLANDS—Bogholt Deep Spring Tract—(Dane County). The 40-acre property, a gift of Dr. and Mrs. Carl M. Bogholt, includes an extensive fen, shrub carr communities, several sedge communities, and a number of springs. It is part of a 700-acre area known as Waubesa Wetlands. The property will be transferred to the University of Wisconsin at Madison for use as a research and study area.

Wyoming

JACKSON HOLE PLANNING PROJECT (SKYLINE) EASEMENT (Teton County). A conservation easement on 51 acres of the Skyline Ranch was donated by Messrs. John Morgan, Harry Baker, Jr., and Peter Jorgensen. Skyline Ranch helps support some of the largest native American game herds in the United States, including elk, moose, bear, and Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep.

WILLA CATHER AND THE PRAIRIE

By Mildred R. Bennett

In August, 1974, The Nature Conservancy purchased 610 acres of native grassland in Webster County, Nebraska. The prairie has been set aside as a memorial to Willa Cather, one of the nation's most distinguished writers and a chronicler of life on the American grasslands. Miss Cather was a journalist, a teacher, a published poet, and managing editor of McClure's, *the New York muckraking publication, before retiring at age 39 to write novels. She won a Pulitzer Prize in 1923 with her book,* One of Ours, *and gained wide acclaim the same year with* A Lost Lady, *a book which mourned the passing of the pioneer spirit in America. Her last novel was published in 1940, seven years before her death. In the following article, Mrs. Mildred Bennett, President of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation, describes the Nebraska prairie's influence on the life and writings of Willa Cather.*

Willa Cather

Willa Cather first came to Webster County in 1883 at the age of nine from the civilized, lush hills of Virginia. The contrast between that land and Nebraska made a lasting impression on her. In her own words, she said, "This country was mostly wild pasture and as naked as the back of your hand. I was little and homesick and lonely and my mother was homesick and nobody paid any attention to us. So the country and I had it out together and by the end of the first autumn, that shaggy grass country had gripped me with a passion I have never been able to shake. It has been the happiness and the curse of my life." [1]

Although Willa Cather left Nebraska to pursue a journalism career in the east, her early impression of the midwestern prairies colored all her work. As she said, "I knew every farm, every tree, every field in the region around my home and they all called out to me. My deepest feelings were rooted in this country because one's strongest emotions and one's most vivid mental pictures are acquired before one is fifteen." [2] She added, "I had searched for books telling about the beauty of the country I love, its romance, the heroism and the strength and courage of its people that had been plowed into the very furrows of its soil and I did not find them. And so I wrote *O Pioneers!*".

O Pioneers! is the story of Alexandra Bergson and her labor to subdue the wild land. When Alexandra is hard pressed for money and wonders if she should sell out like the neighbors and buy land close to the river, she goes with her brother, Emil, to the flatlands by the river and looks at the farms. She decides that the future lies with the upland prairie, and on her return to her own farm on the Divide she decides to buy more land. Cather expresses her own feeling for the prairie in these words: "For the first time, perhaps, since that land emerged from the waters of geologic ages, a human face was set toward it with love and yearning. It seemed beautiful to her, rich and strong and glorious. Her eyes drank in the breadth of it, until her tears blinded her. . . . The history of every country begins in the heart of a man or a woman." [3]

But not all the characters in Willa Cather's novels loved the prairie landscape. Cather said of the prairie when Jim Burden (*My Antonia*) first saw it, "There was nothing but land: not a country at all, but the material out of which countries are

[1] Omaha *Daily Bee*, Oct. 29, 1921.
[2] Eva Mahoney, Magazine Section, Sunday *World Herald*, Nov. 6, 1921.
[3] *O Pioneers!*, p. 65.

The Willa Cather Memorial Prairie is one of only three remaining sections of native prairie in Webster County—a county which was once entirely prairie.

made." And Cather had no illusions about the hard life on the prairie; she saw that it could crush as well as nourish. In *My Antonia*, Antonia's father cannot stand the life in the raw dugout and the loneliness and monotony of the prairie, and one January day he wanders out with his gun, presumably rabbit hunting, goes down to the barn and shoots himself. The episode is based on the suicide of a Webster County settler, a story often retold by the pioneers as they gathered around the stoves on cold winter nights.

Willa Cather witnessed the effects of civilization upon the Nebraska prairie, and in *O Pioneers!*, she describes the country after the wild land was tamed: "From the Norwegian graveyard one looks out over a vast checkerboard, marked off in squares of wheat and corn; light and dark, dark and light. Telephone wires hum along the white roads, which always run at right angles. From the graveyard gate, one can count a dozen gayly painted farmhouses. . . . The light steel windmills tremble throughout their frames and tug at their moorings as they vibrate in the wind that often flows from one week's end to another across that high, active, resolute stretch of country. The Divide is now thickly populated."

At first Cather loved the big white painted farmhouses and admired the modern ways of the telephone and the well-tilled fields, but by the time she came to write *One of Ours*, she was lamenting the old times and the old prairie as she remembered it. When she came home from the east on visits, her chief joy was to hire a horse and rig and, with a couple of her old friends, drive out to see the country. She would find a still untilled place, leave her friends in the buggy, and climb to the top of the ridge and let the wind play in her hair and think long thoughts of the old land, of the prairie as it used to be when it was not yet a country, but the stuff of which countries are made.

Cather's longing for the prairie land and h[illegible] desire to see her old friends brought her frequently back west to Nebraska. Of that she said, "There I was on the Atlantic coast among dear and helpful friends and surrounded by the great masters and teachers with all their tradition of learning and culture and yet I was always being pulled back into Nebraska. Whenever I crossed the Missouri River coming into Nebraska the very smell of the soil tore me to pieces. I could not decide which was the real and which the fake 'me.' I almost decided to settle down on a quarter section of land

Right, Willa Cather's childhood home in Red Cloud, Nebraska. Below, a song sparrow views the prairie from its goldenrod perch.

and let my writing go. My deepest affection was not for the other people and the other places I had been writing about. I loved the country where I had been a kid, where they still called me 'Willie' Cather."

Willa Cather would have loved the high hills and the sweep of wind from Kansas that comes up over the site selected for the Willa Cather Memorial Prairie. Stretching north toward the Republican River Valley and Cather's home town of Red Cloud is a carpet of grasses—mostly little bluestem and prairie sand reed, but also big bluestem, Indian grass, tall dropseed, and others typical of tallgrass prairies. Interspersed among the grasses is an excellent assortment of native forbs and prairie flowers. Though years of overgrazing have gradually reduced the vigor of the native grasses and allowed some non-native species to invade, the 610-acre tract contains the finest remaining tallgrass prairie in Webster County. The Conservancy's Midwestern Regional Office is developing a plan for proper rest and management of the area which should restore the prairie's natural composition and productivity.

Funds for the purchase of the prairie by The Nature Conservancy were provided by the Woods Charitable Fund, Inc. The grant also created a permanent endowment fund for continuing management and maintenance of the area. The Woods Charitable Fund has long been an active supporter of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation in Red Cloud, which for twenty

years has been endeavoring to preserve the landmarks and the places of which Miss Cather wrote. With the help of the Fund, the Memorial now has restored the original Cather home, which is a National Historic Landmark, the Episcopal church which Willa Cather joined in 1922, and other buildings prominent in Cather's life and novels. The headquarters of the Memorial are lodged in the old Farmers and Merchants Bank Building built in 1889 by Silas Garber, the Captain Forrester of *A Lost Lady*, the book which tells of the passing of the frontier and the men who made it great.

The Nature Conservancy has paid a most appropriate tribute to Willa Cather by preserving some of that original prairie that she first saw in 1883, and that she regarded with love and longing all her life.

A Look at Land Stewardship in Connecticut

Within the last few years, The Nature Conservancy has become acutely aware of its obligation to properly manage and protect the lands it holds. Accordingly, the organization is devoting an increasing amount of its energies and resources to the stewardship of the land—not only nationally, but on the regional, field, and chapter levels as well.
The Connecticut Chapter of The Nature Conservancy has developed an excellent preserve management program over the past several years. In the following interview, Charles L. Scott, Executive Director of the Chapter, talks about the program, how it evolved, and why it is working so successfully.

Charles L. Scott

TNC News: How and when was the Connecticut Chapter motivated to improve its preserve management capability?
Scott: About two years ago, the Chapter and its Board of Trustees came to several major realizations concerning the stewardship of the 80-plus preserves within our jurisdiction. We realized that the way in which we preserve Conservancy areas affects every aspect of our activity from future acquisitions to fund raising and membership to public relations. And, like the national organization, we were learning that "acquiring" an area is not the same as "preserving" it; acquisition is merely one of many steps in a responsible preservation program. At the same time, we realized that management policies had to be flexible enough to consider the range in size and habitats of preserves within the system, and that there had to be professional staff to advise the local Preserve Management Committees on these policies.
TNC News: What did the Chapter do first in developing its management program?
Scott: We concentrated on the most vital component of our preserve management system—the volunteer Preserve Management Committees. We continually emphasize the importance of local committee control over Conservancy areas, since it is the local concern which is most capable of staying on top of the daily occurrences on and around the preserves. So we always try to enlist the involvement of the community surrounding each property. The Chapter suggests that committees be made up of a cross-section of local citizens of different ages, vocations and social backgrounds, and that among the committee members there be a lawyer, a scientist, an educator, a representative from local government, and adjacent property owners.
TNC News: What are the responsibilities of the committees?
Scott: Each committee is asked to oversee its preserve on a day-to-day basis, and to develop an approach which incorporates the full meaning of "preservation." Also, they are asked to conduct an inventory of the area's natural qualities and use this data to draw up a long-term program or master plan for preserving the natural area in perpetuity. The Chapter has created model bylaws and procedures to add consistency to the committees' master plans.

Regional preserve management meetings are held each year for the volunteer committees and the public throughout the state.

TNC News: Is professional staff available to advise the committees on management policies?

Scott: Yes. The Chapter has its own Director of Preserve Management who works with the committees in the field and disseminates the experience and ideas of the committees statewide. Also, the Director holds regional preserve management meetings each year for the committees and for the public throughout the state. We've found that committees feel that staff participation complements their own volunteer efforts.

TNC News: You mentioned that the committees are asked to conduct inventories and draw up master plans. That seems like a lot to expect from a volunteer group, no matter how dedicated. How does the Chapter assist the committees in these activities?

Scott: The Chapter has initiated several programs to assist the committees. The first and most fundamental program is the Chapter's joint project with the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies at Yale University. The project was initiated by Dr. Thomas Siccama, a member of the Yale University faculty and a Trustee of the Chapter. This past fall semester, Dr. Siccama instructed a field course for academic credit offered to the graduate students at Yale. The sixteen graduate students involved in the project went in teams and visited all of the Conservancy's holdings in the state. They drew up baseline site analysis reports which included everything from the ecological, surficial and geological characteristics to wildlife and the human history of the areas. They also included apparent management needs and recommendations aimed at preserving each area in its natural state. They filled out data forms on the aquatic and terrestial systems and computer forms following the format used in the New England Natural Areas Inventory.

TNC News: The program is obviously beneficial to both Yale University and the Conservancy.

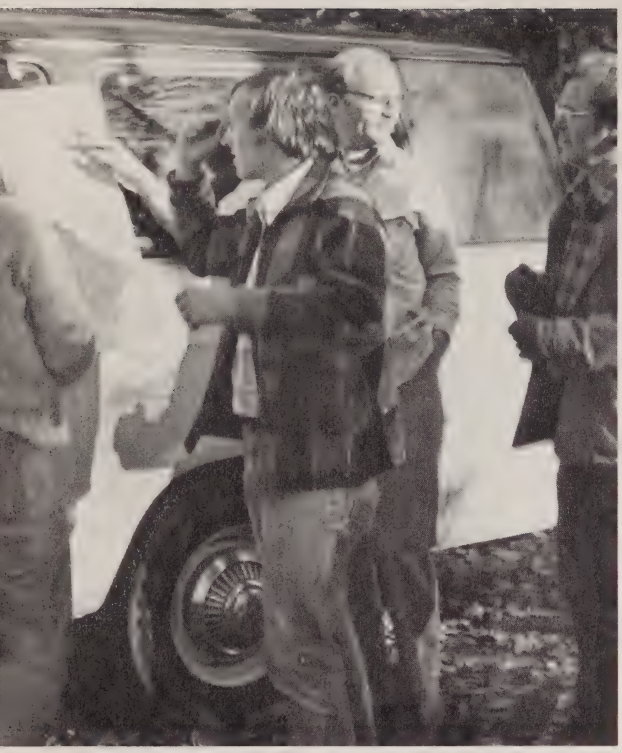
Scott: That's right. The students are given the opportunity to put what they are learning into practice, and in turn, the Conservancy obtains the valuable information it needs to manage its preserves. Each Preserve Management Committee is given the report on its area which can be used as a starting point in developing more detailed studies and the master plan for management.

TNC News: Do you ever use this method to collect data on potential Conservancy preserves?

Scott: Yes, the on-site analysis project has been incorporated into the acquisition procedure, so that the Chapter and the Committees can have a more thorough understanding of potential areas as they are accepted into the preserve system.

TNC News: In view of the success of the Yale-Connecticut Chapter project, does the Chapter anticipate other similar programs?

Scott: Yes. The Yale reports will outline research needs and opportunities on each preserve, and should initiate other programs on Conservancy preserves. As presently planned, we will be searching out qualified undergraduate and graduate stu-



Diane Renshaw and Les Corey, Yale graduate student coordinators of the Yale-Connecticut Chapter project, Dr. Thomas Siccama, initiator of the project, and Charles Scott, Chapter director, meet on one of the preserves.

dents to fill summer and year-round internships. The program is presently in the planning stage.

TNC News: How will it be funded?

Scott: It will be funded in part by the major universities in the state, and in part by funds from outside sources. Considering the success of the Yale project, prospects for funding appear to be good.

TNC News: Are the volunteer Preserve Management Committees involved in the fund-raising activities?

Scott: Yes. The committees are being asked to fund their own internships in order to collect the data needed for the master plans. The Chapter is assisting the committees in their fund-raising through an experimental Preserve Management Membership Program. Seven committees scattered throughout the state are soliciting memberships in the Conservancy. The dues would normally be split between the Chapter and the National Office, but in this particular campaign, those committees which solicit the members may keep what dues are raised in the first year. The experiment was made possible through a special matching grant from the Conservancy's Rodney Johnson Preserve Endowment Fund.

TNC News: But how are preserve management and membership development related?

Scott: First of all, our areas can best be managed if there is understanding and support of the Conservancy's objectives within the community. Increased Conservancy membership within these communities helps to accomplish this. Secondly, the borders of our preserves are best protected when adjacent property owners are aware of and involved in Conservancy activities. When adjacent property owners are Conservancy members, it is most likely that they will become involved. Third, drawing up master plans and carrying out those plans costs a certain amount of money. This campaign helps alleviate some of the financial burden and creates a base for further financial support. And finally, the Conservancy is in need of more long-term members, and, considering the cost of other methods of raising membership, this particular method is relatively inexpensive.

TNC News: Was the experimental program a success?

Scott: Yes, we've been very pleased with the results. The Committees were able to bring in over 100 new members in the period of six weeks.

TNC News: Is the Chapter working in other ways to increase membership and to make the Conservancy known to people throughout the state?

Scott: Yes. This coming spring, the Chapter is planning to hold several guided nature walks on different preserves throughout the state. The walks will be open to the public and will be led by qualified individuals. Several elementary and secondary schools are now using Conservancy preserves for outdoor education programs. Also, we've been investigating the possibility of setting up TNC High School Clubs, where students adopt a Conservancy preserve as a long-term project and assist in the activities of the volunteer committees.

TNC News: Does the Chapter ever work with other conservation organizations in the state?

Scott: We've worked with Connecticut Audubon as well as a number of local land trusts, in order to coordinate our activities in education and other aspects of preserve management.

TNC News: You've shown that the Connecticut Chapter's preserve management program is an effective one which could serve as an example to other Conservancy chapters. To what do you attribute your success?

Scott: The Chapter has been able to carry out the program due mainly to the dedicated support—in both time and money—of the many volunteers throughout the state. The volunteers have made it possible for the Chapter to forward the organization's prime aim of preserving and protecting natural areas, while expanding the effective reach of The Nature Conservancy.

Saving the MISSISSIPPI SANDHILL CRANE

By David E. Morine Vice President, Land Acquisition

For many years, a small population of birds in Jackson County, Mississippi, was thought to be a misplaced colony of Florida sandhill cranes (*Grus canadensis pratensis*). The birds were almost identical in appearance—large, long-legged, with dark gray plumage, and a bright red crown. But in 1972, researcher J. W. Aldrich determined that the Mississippi cranes were definitely a separate and distinct subspecies (*G. canadensis pulla*), now found only in Mississippi. The Jackson County colony, consisting of 38 to 40 cranes, is all that remains of a population that once ranged from Western Louisiana to Georgia and into the peninsula of Florida.

Like most endangered species, the Mississippi sandhill crane has not been able to withstand human intrusion. The only reason this last colony has been able to survive is that it has remained in relative isolation among the few remaining sections of wet pine and grass savannahs that were once typical of most of the Mississippi coast. The Mississippi sandhill crane does not migrate; therefore, unlike most other branches of the crane family, it does not have the ability to find suitable habitat along an extended flyway. The continued existence of the bird can be assured only if its Mississippi habitat is preserved.

In 1972, when the Mississippi crane was recognized in its own state and nationally as an endangered species, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service authorized the establishment of a Mississippi Sandhill Crane Refuge in Jackson County. Two separate areas totaling approximately 10,000 acres were designated as the site for the proposed refuge. This past November, the Conservancy, at the request of the Fish and Wildlife Service, took the first step by purchasing 1,708 acres within the proposed refuge. With financing provided by The Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States, the land was purchased from a developer who had planned to turn the entire area into a major residential subdivision.

The rest of the designated land is under private ownership and remains relatively undisturbed, due largely to the fact that the soil is too poor to permit any large scale agricultural use, and is too wet for timber production. However, within the past five years, three major threats have arisen which could very well destroy this land as a viable habitat for the cranes. The first and most visible is the pending continuation of Interstate 10 along the Mississippi coast, passing directly through the proposed refuge. Fish and Wildlife Service officials, while aware that construction of the highway may affect the flowage of the wetland, have determined that the road will not destroy the proposed refuge; however, they are concerned that the highway will open up this heretofore secluded area to commercial, residential, and recreational development —the second major threat.

The proposed refuge lies directly between Biloxi and Pascagoula, both of which are experiencing tremendous growth. Biloxi is one of the most popular retirement and recreational communities in the southeast, and all the new companies that

The Mississippi sandhill crane is dark gray with a bright red crown, and stands about 3½ feet high.

are moving into Pascagoula continue to convert the once sleepy little southern town into a major industrial complex. Interstate 10 places the proposed refuge only minutes from both of these communities, and developers are starting to speculate on all of the land in the area.

Finally, the biggest threat facing the Mississippi sandhill crane comes from the old line timber companies who have held these lands for years, but due to the poor quality of the soil, have never bothered to do anything with them. The topography of the area is gently rolling with elevations in the two proposed areas ranging between 20 and 40 feet above sea level. The drainage pattern is very irregular with the upper reaches of the water courses coming together in marshes and swamps. The soils that support the savannahs are very poorly drained and the water table is very close to the surface. Thus, with so much good land for growing trees and crops in other areas of the state, the main habitat of the crane has been left pretty much alone.

Above: Undisturbed, typical sandhill crane feeding grounds. The bird prefers the wet pine and grass savannahs of the Mississippi coast for its year-round habitat. Below: Sandhill crane eggs are buff-color, speckled with shades of brown.

Unfortunately, the recent and sudden realization that the country's resources are not infinite and that the world is depleting its natural resources at an alarming rate has forced major corporations to reassess their landholdings. Most of the major timber companies are trying to manage their lands on a sustained yield basis; every acre, therefore, has suddenly become important. The result is that in recent years, thousands of acres of open meadows have been planted in slash pine. To accommodate this growth, shallow furrows are first plowed through the open grasslands, then connected to larger ditches which drain the water into swamps and bayous. In some areas, large ditches have been driven through the swamps to further expedite drainage, thereby causing the swamps to grow into dense bushy jungles. The conversion over the years of savannahs and grasslands to areas growing slash pine has reduced the crane's nesting and feeding habitat from what used to be hundreds of thousands of acres to the mere 10,000 that exist today.

The bulk of the 10,000 acres is owned by St. Regis Paper Company, and despite repeated requests by both The Nature Conservancy and the Fish and Wildlife Service, the company refuses to follow the fine examples set by Union Camp, Georgia Pacific, Fibreboard, and other major corporations which have donated critical natural areas to the Conservancy. Such an action by St. Regis

Mississippi sandhill crane chicks.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service biologist Jacob Valentine and Mississippi Chief of Game and Fisheries, Bill Turcotte, examine a sandhill crane nest.

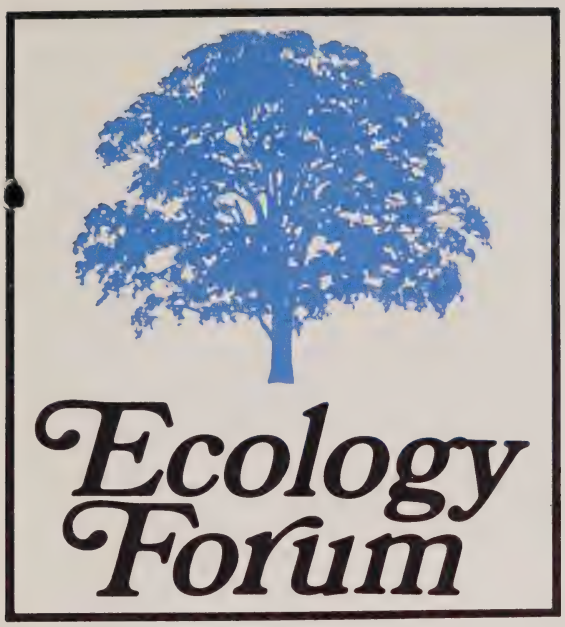
could preserve over sixty percent of the land within the proposed refuge and almost insure the survival of the last crane colony. In a recent letter to the Conservancy, a company spokesman wrote that "the true value of this land to St. Regis is its perpetual raw material productivity." What this means is that sometime in the very near future, the company will have to drain its 6,000 acres and plant it in slash pine. It is doubtful that the Fish and Wildlife Service will be able to purchase the land from St. Regis at its fair market value unless funds can be identified in the very near future.

Apprehensive about the future of the cranes and their habitat, the Fish and Wildlife Service in 1965 began the slow and tedious process of creating a captive breeding flock of Mississippi sandhill cranes. In a cooperative agreement with the Mississippi Game and Fish Commission, not more than six crane eggs a year are collected and transferred for hatching to the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center at Laurel, Maryland. During the first phase of the program, from 1965 through the spring of 1969, a total of 51 eggs were observed and 22 eggs were collected for propagation purposes. The experiment was not as risky as it sounds, for biologists had learned early in their studies that Mississippi sandhill cranes are inclined to raise only one chick a year from the two eggs that are usually laid. The disturbance of taking one egg was only temporary, for the mother crane soon returned to the nest to protect and hatch the one remaining egg.

Of the 51 eggs observed—believed to be the total production of the entire colony for the four breeding seasons involved—29 eggs were left in the nests out of which 18 wild eggs hatched. Fourteen of the 20 eggs collected for propagation purposes also hatched. Through the hard work and care of biologists at the Patuxent center, a permanent captive flock of 9 Mississippi sandhill cranes now exists. If a suitable refuge can be established, it is hoped that captive cranes can be transferred to semi-wild enclosed additions to the national refuge where they will produce young to fly out and supplement the wild colony of breeding birds. Biologists from both the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Mississippi Game and Fish Department have done a magnificent job in studying and propagating the cranes over the last ten years; all they need now is the land.

The Mississippi Game and Fish Department has designated the Sandhill Crane lands as a top priority in its Wildlife Heritage Program, and the Fish and Wildlife Service has already pledged a significant amount of its endangered species funds to the project. In addition to these two public agencies, The Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States has taken an extreme interest in preserving the cranes and provided favorable financing for the Conservancy's first purchase. Despite these very positive commitments, every day threatens the existence of this last colony. Even though the local residents admire the birds and have helped protect them, a few cranes are found shot every year. Furthermore, fire roads through the area have opened the crane's previously inaccessible habitat to the public, and human intrusion has had an adverse effect on the bird's nesting habits.

Through the Conservancy's initial acquisition of 1,708 acres, the Mississippi sandhill crane now has a foothold on life. But a foothold is not enough, and we will continue to work to acquire all the lands within the proposed refuge. There is no question that funding will always be a problem, but we hope that through our efforts, and the efforts of other concerned individuals and groups, the present owners of the Sandhill Crane lands will come to the realization that they, their children, the people of Mississippi and the people of the world cannot afford to lose this magnificent bird.



No. 14
by Robert E. Jenkins

LAND USE PLANNING REVISITED

A year ago in this column excitement was expressed over the possibilities of land use planning. Some of the exhilaration has subsequently worn off. The National Land Use Policy and Planning Assistance Act did not pass in the House of Representatives; instead it was tabled on a very close vote. The outlook for future passage of the bill may be good, as some of its chief opponents fared badly in the recent elections; however, the failure of the Act has been a set-back, and the past year has been one of retrenchment on many fronts. The Department of Interior's Office of Land Use and Water Planning has been prevented from staffing up to meet the needs for technical development, assistance and guideline formulation, though it has issued contracts for some potentially useful studies on the outside. Many of the state efforts which had been proceeding in anticipation of Federal assistance, while not quite coming to a full stop, have lost much of their momentum. The effects of uncertainty have been aggravated by the energy and economic crises which have simultaneously imposed potential new pressures on some lands while reducing the prospects for an adequately funded land use planning program. The effort is characterized throughout the nation at present by funding shortages and shoestring operations. As the economic crises deepens, it becomes an increasingly formidable weapon against controls of any kind, as would-be developers exploit the public's fears of depression to justify economic activity at any price.

At the same time, those of us interested in the preservation of natural lands and diversity, though welcoming an intelligent movement toward systematic land use planning, have become increasingly apprehensive about certain aspects of the planning process. Our concern springs from several roots.

First, as society has placed more and more technology between itself and natural processes, ecological considerations have increasingly become afterthoughts in the decision making process —no less in planning than elsewhere. Most planners are taught far more economics than ecology; indeed, planning curricula generally do not include courses in fundamental ecology as pre-requisites.

Second, comprehensive land use planning processes would depend on rapid compilation of a wide range of existing information to facilitate multifactorial analysis. Unfortunately, because of the complexity of ecological information and the lack of ecological surveys, there is a relative paucity of data on ecological systems compared with that available on geology, hydrology, soils, demography, current and projected land uses, urbanization, sociological variables, and so on.

Third, powerful new information collection methodologies, especially remote sensing, are figuring heavily in the development of land use planning efforts, and are either technically or economically unable to operate at a sufficiently high level of resolution for our purposes. Though they may work well to map current land uses, nonobvious geologic conditions, or the extent of floodplains, the new methodologies cannot easily be used to discriminate among an indefinite number of biological or ecological variables such as the distribution of endangered species.

Due to these and perhaps other causes, even the best-meaning planners have been tending to focus on gross "environmental performance standards" having to do with carrying capacity and development constraints. This approach, when used, chiefly delineates areas of high productivity (such as prime farmland and salt marshes), gross resource significance (such as aquifer recharge areas), or areas hazardous for development (such as floodplains, seismic zones or unstable substrates). While no one disputes that all of these elements must be taken into account in land use planning decisions, the approach is not a sufficient basis for truly rational land use determinations since areas with a number of other intrinsic values are overlooked. All of the unique or limited elements such as representative undisturbed natural

communities, endangered species habitats, scientifically vital environment baseline sites, and even cultural monuments such as historic places need also to be included in our reckoning, whether or not they contain inherent obstacles to development. Though the original national bill recognized the desirability of identifying a category of "fragile and historic" critical areas which apparently was intended to include these things, experience gained at national symposia and workshops and in the reading of the planning literature has indicated that such elements are likely to be neglected. If they are, land use planning itself could become a homogenizing process which, by playing no deliberate role in preserving this continent's natural diversity, actively works to eliminate it.

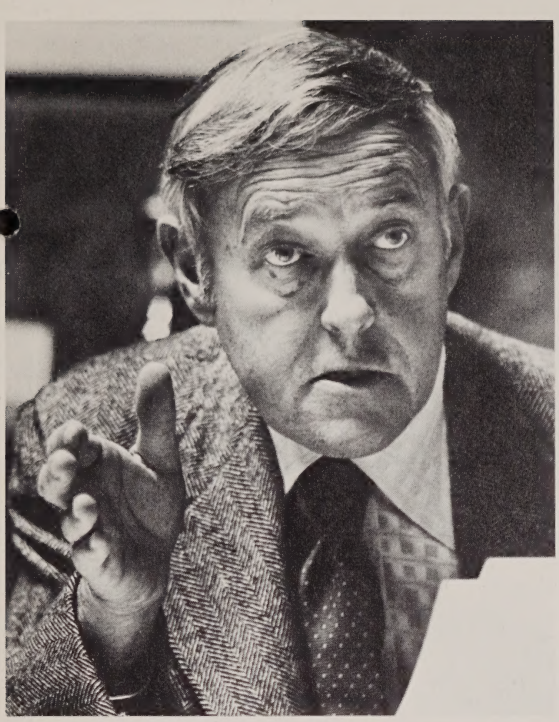
Moreover, there are two other difficulties that relate to implementation of any land use plans developed. Since land use planners would like to apply the process to the largest possible amount of land, their preoccupation has been with control of development through regulation. This is very much the "sticky wicket" of the land use planning effort since even after the best information has been assembled and analyzed, it will still be necessary to show why public or private developers should not be allowed to alter a particular landscape as they intend. Where put to a test, this will ordinarily require a persuasive showing that the public interest in preventing a development is of sufficient importance to deny the private owner his profits or the public agency its intended objective. This will be easiest to demonstrate in cases of jeopardy to public health or safety, as in the case of floodplain development; or where there will be a clear loss of some pre-existing benefit, such as the contributions of farm land to agricultural productivity or of swamps to mediate hydrological cycles. The benefits of maintaining the habitat of a little-known endangered species or of the last stand of an old growth forest community may seem more obscure and less immediate. Further, the degree of protection these latter require might be such as to exclude the extracting of any immediate economic product and such tight proscriptions would presumably require an even stronger demonstration of public interest. Thus, it is likely that regulation will be used primarily to control the most destructive sorts of land uses and only where an immediate public need is obvious. If such is the case, adequate protection for natural areas may still depend chiefly on outright acquisition.

Over the last year, these considerations have convinced many of us involved in natural areas protection that though we should continue to cooperate as closely as possible with the land use planning movement we should not too greatly rely on that process to accomplish our objectives. Therefore, we have pushed forward vigorously in a continuation of the natural areas inventories and protection activities which have characterized our efforts in the past. The State Natural Heritage Programs, the natural areas system study for the Department of the Interior, the special legislative and implementation studies, our contribution to preserving the nation's natural heritage as a Bicentennial theme, and our many cooperative programs with other groups and agencies have all been developed to augment our traditional natural areas preservation capabilities while making a unique contribution to overall rational land use patterns.

No substantive assistance can be given to larger programs if all we have is good ideas about natural areas. We still have a long way to go in the maturation of our inventories, the theoretical basis for natural areas preservation, the effectiveness of our protection strategies, and the adequacy of financial and public support. At the same time, we are sure that we are working on a fundamental piece of the larger picture which is accomplishable and partakes of the best aspects of a fail-safe resource management strategy. Whereas some parts of the land use planning effort may be bogged down for years over the magnitude of the task, the nebulosity of the concepts, and the controversial nature of the implementing mechanisms, we in the natural areas movement, without detracting from that other effort, can spend that time in activities that will ultimately be useful to us all. We can compile and organize a great deal of critical ecological data; we can analyze that data to set priorities for natural areas preservation; and, we can help effectively utilize limited resources for their actual protection. We have the advantage that we are dealing with real and definable entities in biological species and habitats and that we can proceed incrementally as resources allow. We can utilize traditional proven techniques of land ownership and control, and we can appeal to man's emotional love of the diverse natural world. The accomplishment of all of this, though devoted to the single purpose of preserving natural ecological diversity from unnecessary destruction, will simultaneously make a critical contribution to sensible land use determinations.

NEW CONSERVANCY PRESERVE DIRECTORY

A new, complete Preserve Directory listing all lands saved since 1954 is now in production and will be available to Conservancy members at a reduced price. Watch for order blanks and more information in the next issue of the *News*.



Thomas L. McCall

GOVERNOR McCALL APPOINTED

Former Oregon Governor Tom McCall has been appointed to the Conservancy's Board of Governors. Governor McCall, a forthright state leader and strong advocate of effective land use, will replace Rudolph O. Marcoux of Bangor, Maine. Mr. Marcoux, a retired broadcasting executive, resigned from the Conservancy Board for reasons of health. Mr. McCall served as Oregon governor for eight years and, according to a recent article in *Saturday Review/World,* was "the heart and voice" of the state's controlled growth movement.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

At its October 19, 1974 meeting, the Board of Governors of The Nature Conservancy discussed the current dues structure in light of rising costs. It was decided that regular dues would remain at their present level; however, effective July 1, 1975, life membership dues will be $500, eliminating the $300 and $1,000 membership categories. Until that date, a bargain opportunity exists for members and friends who desire a lifetime affiliation with The Nature Conservancy.

1975 ANNUAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE

The 1975 Annual Meeting has been scheduled for April 26 at the National 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, Maryland, just north of the Washington, D.C., line. Additional details, "official notice," and lodging information will be mailed to all members prior to the meeting. This year's locale gives Conservancy members an opportunity to combine attendance at the meeting with a preview bicentennial trip to the Nation's Capital, ahead of next year's crowds.

The National 4-H Center is a modern comfortable conference complex used year round by many groups holding events in metropolitan Washington. Facilities include meeting rooms, cafeteria and guest lodgings.

Tentative plans call for the meeting itself—held Saturday morning—to be prefaced by a Governor's Reception, Friday evening, April 25, for members and guests from the judicial, legislative and executive branches of government. Also on Friday, in the afternoon, the Board Committee on Volunteer Activities will hold an open meeting at the Center. Committee Chairman G. William DeSousa invites all members to attend. Presentation of Conservancy national awards is scheduled for the Saturday luncheon.

A special field trip is planned for Saturday afternoon. Members will return to the Conference Center early Saturday evening.

Sunday, following the meeting, members might wish to continue the bicentennial preview with a trip to Virginia's Colonial Williamsburg, Yorktown and Jamestown, three hours away by car or bus and minutes by regularly scheduled airlines. If you plan to tour the Virginia sites, we suggest you make your reservations early. Contact Colonial Williamsburg, Williamsburg, Virginia, or Virginia State Travel Service, 907 17th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, for additional information.

PATCHES AVAILABLE

Green and white patches embroidered with the Conservancy's oak leaf logo are available to Conservancy members for $1.00. Write to Fran Angelone, Communications Department, at the national office.

PHOTOGRAPHS: Susan Bournique, p. 11 (bottom); Barbara Dodge, p. 4; Michael P. Gadomski, p. 6; Mississippi Game & Fish Commission, p. 15; R. Noble, p. 18; Tom Sennett, inside back cover; Glen Smart, p. 16; South Carolina Wildlife & Marine Resources Department, p. 22 (top); Bill Turcotte, p. 17; Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial, pp. 9, 11 (top); Lucia Woods, pp. 8, 10.

In June, the Santee Club donated to the Conservancy 23,024 acres at the mouth of South Carolina's Santee River. The gift is believed to be the most valuable ever made to the cause of conservation.

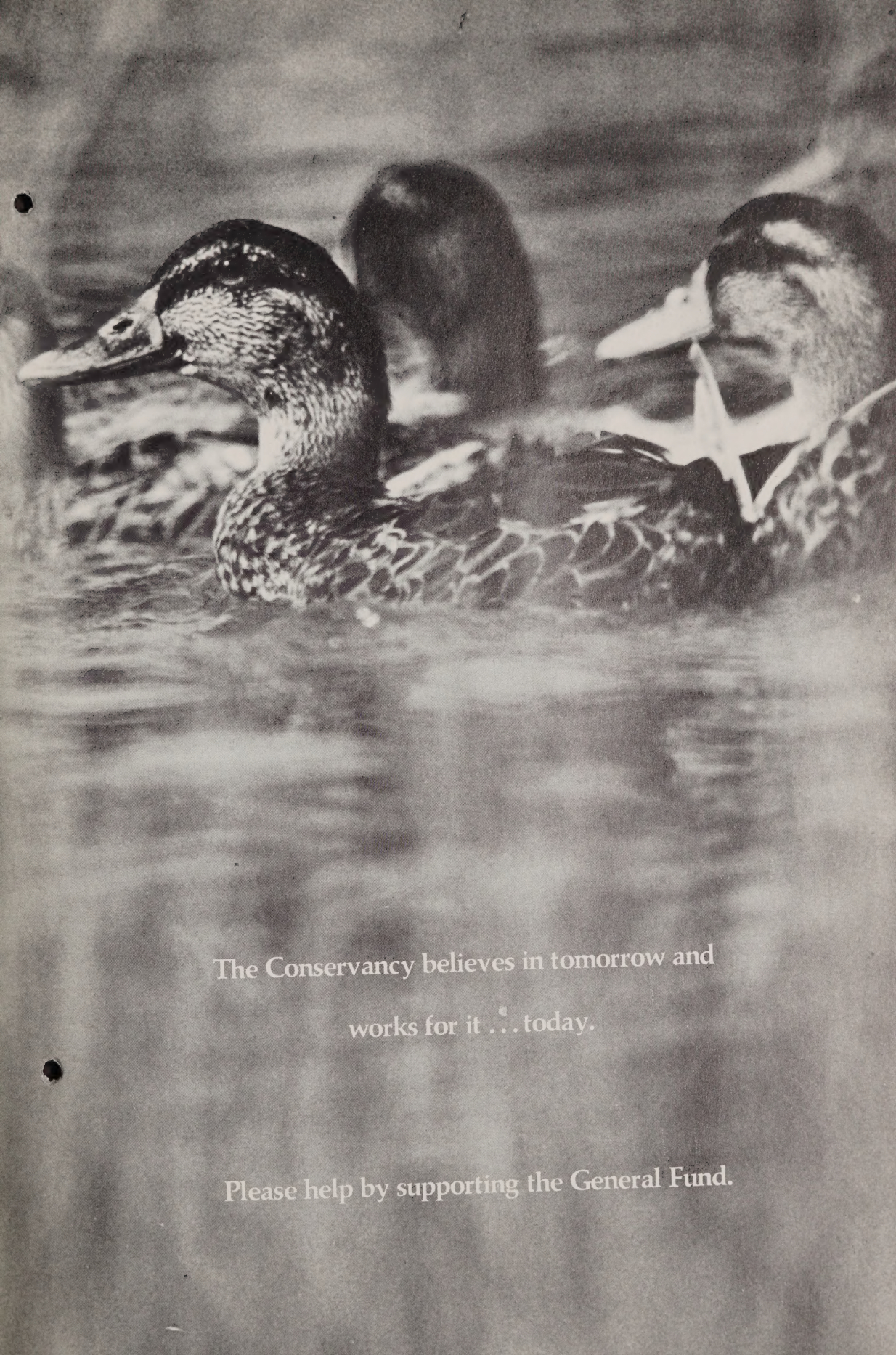
President's Report

1974: A Very Successful Year

Preliminary figures show that during 1974 the Conservancy, its members and supporters were responsible for completing over 200 land conservation projects comprising 300,000 acres valued in excess of $60,000,000. Importantly, the projects in 35 states, the Virgin Islands and Canada represent fine examples of America's natural heritage that will be with us for this bicentennial and the years to come. Although the lands have been preserved by you primarily for their inherent natural values and long term biotic importance, the prairies, islands, forests and wetlands will bring knowledge as well as enjoyment to this and future generations.

In many ways, through the introduction of new programs, through the increases in project activity, and through the exploration of new land conservation methods, 1974 was the most successful year in the Conservancy's history. Thank you for making it possible. The coming year presents many new opportunities and offers fresh challenges. With your continued help and support, the Conservancy can enthusiastically take advantage of the opportunities and meet the challenges in 1975 to help preserve and protect the nation's wild lands.

The Conservancy's largest single project, the 220,000-acre Sevilleta Preserve in New Mexico, was completed in early 1974. The Conservancy purchased the area at a fraction of its value from the Campbell Family Foundation.



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